

PRYOR PERKINS.

JUNE 21, 1898.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. GALLINGER, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 8670.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8670) granting a pension to Pryor Perkins, have examined the same and report:

The report of the Committee on Invalid Pensions of the House of Representatives is as follows:

This bill as amended proposes to pension at \$40 per month Pryor Perkins, of Jacksboro, Tenn.

The evidence in this case, which is abundant and trustworthy, establishes the following facts:

Pryor Perkins, the claimant, was a loyal citizen of East Tennessee during the war of the rebellion, and on account of his loyalty, devotion to the Union cause, exceptional intelligence, and great familiarity with the country in East Tennessee and that vicinity, was enlisted and sworn in as a scout in what was known as Captain Reynolds's company of regular scouts. These men were not regularly mustered into the service of the United States, but were paid for their services by the Government.

This claimant commenced such service in 1863 and was discharged therefrom in 1864, being unable to perform duty longer by reason of disability incurred while acting as such scout, and which disability was probably the result of exposure and hard riding. He was employed by and very useful to General Burnside in August, 1863, and went with the advance of the army to Knoxville, Tenn., and was engaged in many other expeditions with and in aid of the Union Army, which it is unnecessary here to detail.

The service performed by this man was more perilous than that of the great majority of private soldiers, and was of incalculable value to the Union cause. The claimant's knee was injured during such service, and amputation above the knee became necessary in 1878. He was sound when he entered the Union service. This claimant is 81 years old, broken down in health, and nearly blind. He is without property or means of support of any kind. The claimant is a man of good character, and his disabilities are not the result of vicious habits. He has no pensionable status at the Bureau, as he was not regularly mustered into the United States service, and hence special action by Congress is necessary if we do justice to this scout.

The bill is therefore reported back with the recommendation that it pass.

It will be remembered that early in the session the Senate passed a bill granting a pension to Simpson Everett Stillwell, a scout and guide, at the rate of \$20 per month, which the House reduced to \$12, and the

amendment being insisted upon, the bill was passed at that rate. Stillwell served in the capacity of guide and scout a much longer time than the claimant under this bill, and his services were of greater value to the Government.

The record shows that Stillwell had a most remarkable career as a scout and guide, and, although not an enlisted man, he performed services such as justly entitle him to pension by special act of Congress. In addition to performing most perilous duties as a scout, enduring privations and hardships such as few men could have endured, he did actual military service on occasions, exposing his life with a reckless courage that proved him to be a genuine hero. His services were in the campaigns against the Indians, commencing in 1867 and continuing until 1884, when he was compelled by rheumatism—the result of exposure—to discontinue his work for the Government. It will thus be seen that Stillwell served for seventeen years, while the claimant under this bill only claims to have served from 1863 to 1864, a period of less than one year.

By reference to Senate Report No. 184, first session Fifty-fifth Congress, it will be seen that Stillwell's services were recognized by 17 different army officers of high rank, all of whom certify that his services were of the greatest possible value to the Government, while no such testimony is adduced in behalf of the claimant under consideration, and there seems to be no justification whatever for the high rate of pension (\$40 per month) named in the bill.

Inasmuch as the House, by amending the Stillwell bill, established the rate of pension in cases of this kind at \$12 per month, your committee see no reason whatever for violating that rule in favor of a claimant who rendered services of much less value than the man who has been allowed \$12 per month. Accordingly the passage of the bill is recommended after being amended by striking out, in line 7, the words "forty dollars a month" and substituting the words "twelve dollars per month."

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